



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10**

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OFFICE OF
ECOSYSTEMS, TRIBAL AND
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

February 10, 2012

John Erickson, District Ranger
Emmett Ranger District
1805 Highway 16, #5
Emmett, Idaho 83617

Re: EPA Comments on the Scriver Creek Integrated Restoration Project DEIS (EPA Project Number 07-001-AFS).

Dear Mr. Erickson:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Scriver Creek Integrated Restoration Project on the Emmett Ranger District of the Boise National Forest in Idaho. Our review was conducted in accordance with EPA responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act (CAA). Section 309 specifically directs the EPA to review and comment in writing on the environmental impacts associated with all major federal actions.

The DEIS analyzes potential environmental impacts associated with commercial and noncommercial timber harvest and fuels treatment on 4,104 acres. The stated objectives for these treatments are to restore desired vegetation conditions (as identified in the 2010 Forest Plan); improve watershed conditions by reducing road-related impacts while meeting long term transportation system needs; and provide wood products to support local and regional economies.

Our analysis finds the proposed alternative (Alternative B) to be the environmentally preferable alternative. We are supportive of the proposed road decommissioning, as well as the realignment of NFS Road 696. These activities in particular will support implementation of the total maximum daily load (TMDL) for the Middle Fork of the Payette River. We also appreciate the work undertaken by the Forest to complete a Geomorphic Road Analysis and Inventory Package (GRAIP) analysis for the project area. Though resource intensive, data provided through GRAIP analysis are invaluable in terms of identifying priority areas for sediment reduction.

It is unusual to encounter a DEIS with only one action alternative carried through the analysis. According to the CEQ NEPA Regulations (40 CFR 1502.14), the alternatives section of the DEIS is required to (among other things) rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives; and devote substantial treatment to each alternative, including the proposed action, so that reviewers may evaluate their comparative merits. We understand, however, the Forest's rationale behind the decision to pursue a limited range of alternatives. Because no significant issues were identified during internal or external scoping (either in 2007 or 2010), and because the DEIS does consider additional alternatives in Section 2.3 (Alternatives Eliminated from Detailed Study), we have determined not to raise the range of alternatives as a concern. We are assigning a rating of LO (Lack of Objection) to the DEIS. An explanation of this rating is enclosed.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment and if you have any questions or concerns please contact me at (206) 553-1601 or by electronic mail at reichgott.christine@epa.gov, or you may contact Teresa Kubo of my staff at, (503) 326-2859 or by electronic mail at kubo.teresa@epa.gov .

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christine B. Reichgott". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the "i" in "Christine".

Christine B. Reichgott, Manager
Environmental Review and Sediment Management Unit

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Rating System for
Draft Environmental Impact Statements
Definitions and Follow-Up Action***

Environmental Impact of the Action

LO – Lack of Objections

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) review has not identified any potential environmental impacts requiring substantive changes to the proposal. The review may have disclosed opportunities for application of mitigation measures that could be accomplished with no more than minor changes to the proposal.

EC – Environmental Concerns

EPA review has identified environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment. Corrective measures may require changes to the preferred alternative or application of mitigation measures that can reduce these impacts.

EO – Environmental Objections

EPA review has identified significant environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to provide adequate protection for the environment. Corrective measures may require substantial changes to the preferred alternative or consideration of some other project alternative (including the no-action alternative or a new alternative). EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

EU – Environmentally Unsatisfactory

EPA review has identified adverse environmental impacts that are of sufficient magnitude that they are unsatisfactory from the standpoint of public health or welfare or environmental quality. EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts. If the potential unsatisfactory impacts are not corrected at the final EIS stage, this proposal will be recommended for referral to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).

Adequacy of the Impact Statement

Category 1 – Adequate

EPA believes the draft EIS adequately sets forth the environmental impact(s) of the preferred alternative and those of the alternatives reasonably available to the project or action. No further analysis of data collection is necessary, but the reviewer may suggest the addition of clarifying language or information.

Category 2 – Insufficient Information

The draft EIS does not contain sufficient information for EPA to fully assess environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment, or the EPA reviewer has identified new reasonably available alternatives that are within the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which could reduce the environmental impacts of the action. The identified additional information, data, analyses or discussion should be included in the final EIS.

Category 3 – Inadequate

EPA does not believe that the draft EIS adequately assesses potentially significant environmental impacts of the action, or the EPA reviewer has identified new, reasonably available alternatives that are outside of the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which should be analyzed in order to reduce the potentially significant environmental impacts. EPA believes that the identified additional information, data, analyses, or discussions are of such a magnitude that they should have full public review at a draft stage. EPA does not believe that the draft EIS is adequate for the purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act and or Section 309 review, and thus should be formally revised and made available for public comment in a supplemental or revised draft EIS. On the basis of the potential significant impacts involved, this proposal could be a candidate for referral to the CEQ.

* From EPA Manual 1640 Policy and Procedures for the Review of Federal Actions Impacting the Environment. February, 1987.